
U.S. Representative

John Spratt

South Carolina # 5th District

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Spratt Hails House Passage of Historic Education Bill

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC) today hailed House passage of a historic education reform bill, designed to raise student achievement levels through a combination of stronger standards and accountability, but with substantially increased resources.

“This bill,” said Spratt, “is the most important reform of federal education laws in 30 years, and it will make a difference for our schools. For the first time, we set a goal of eliminating the achievement gap between rich and poor students and minority and non-minority students that has existed in our educational system for decades. And we set for the first time an achievable but concrete time-frame for getting there.

“In addition,” said Spratt, “for the first time in history, we state as federal law that teachers must be qualified in their subject area within four years. But equally as important, we give them resources they need to reach that goal.”

The bill passed the House 381 to 41. The Senate is expected to pass the bill soon, and it could become law before Christmas.

The bill authorizes \$26.3 billion in 2002 for assistance to elementary and secondary schools, \$8.5 billion (33%) more than was provided in 2001. The bill authorizes similar funding each year for 2003-2006.

“This bill provides a good combination of accountability and resources,” Spratt said. “In all fairness, we cannot expect one without providing the other.”

Spratt, the Ranking Member on the Budget Committee, began the ball rolling for education by bringing to the House a Budget Resolution with a major increase in funding. The end result is an appropriations bill funding the education programs in this bill, which will probably be considered by Congress next week. All told, that bill is expected to provide nearly \$4 billion more in funding for elementary and secondary education programs funded by the federal government, a nearly 20 percent increase in appropriations.

“This bill spends federal dollars on students who need it most,” said Spratt. “It requires

qualified teachers in the classroom, it provides new resources, and it sets bright lines for what we expected students and schools to achieve.”

“This bill will help return our school system to the original goal of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act -- to ensure that all children have the opportunity to learn regardless of income, background, or racial or ethnic identity. But unlike the laws on the books over the past 35 years, we will back up our commitment with a set of expectations, time-lines, and resources,” Spratt said.

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A Brief Summary of H.R. 1, “No Child Left Behind Act”

EDUCATION REFORM - REAL REFORM WITH REAL RESOURCES

- C H.R. 1 will help return our school system to the **original goals** of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act - to ensure that **all** children have an opportunity to learn. We will no longer tolerate failure for our poorest students.
- C For the first time in federal law, we establish clear goals and a timeline for narrowing the achievement gap between disadvantaged children and their more affluent peers and between minority and non-minority students.
- C Schools progress would be measured through annual stated-based tests taken in grades three through eight.
- C State test results would be compared against a high quality national benchmark test taken by a sample of students in each state, called the NAEP.
- C The bill establishes **unprecedented targeting** of federal dollars toward the neediest children.
- C The bill sets a clear four-year goal for ensuring that all **teachers are qualified** to teach in their subject matter.
- C The bill provides new resources for mentoring, training, salary enhancement and other improvements that will help us meet this critical four-year goal. We are **supporting teachers** by giving them the resources they need to do their jobs.
- C The bill authorizes \$13.5 billion for grants to provide **excellent education for students with disabilities** for 2002. This represents a 57% increase over the \$8.5 billion appropriated for 2001. And, this funding will gradually increase to \$25 billion for 2006, which is almost triple the current appropriation.

- C The bill provides a significant new **commitment to bilingual** and immigrant education. For the first time in federal law we establish a **formula** that will target federal aid to where the greatest need in bilingual education exists. And we kept out the highly punitive elements of the President's original plan.
- C For the first time in federal law, we will require that **parents are clearly informed** about the quality of their child's education. School districts and schools are required to provide report cards to parents on student performance and teacher qualifications, and the bill makes clear exactly what information parents must receive.
- C The bill establishes a new program to promote **technology in the classroom**.
- C The bill authorizes significant funding increases for the Troops-to-Teachers program, which helps former members of the armed services train to become teachers.
- C The bill reauthorized the impact aid program through 2007, provides compensation to schools that educate children of military personnel.
- C The bill provides **significant funding increases**. Overall for ESEA programs, the President requested a 3% increase. HR 1 will lead to a 20% (\$3.7 billion) increase in the forthcoming Labor-HHS appropriations bill for fiscal year 2002.

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